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NO CCLXXX.

FRENCH'S MINOR DRAMA.

The Acting Edition.

TOM NODDY'S SECRET:

A FARCE, IN ONE ACT,

BY THOMAS HAYNES BAYLY, ESQ.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

A description of the Costume—Cast of the Characters—Entrances and Exits—Relative Positions of the Performers on the Stage, and the whole of the Stage Business.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

	LONDON. *Haymarket.*	NEW YORK. *Park.*	PHILADELPHIA. *Chestnut St.*	PARK, N. Y. 1840.
CAPTAIN ORMOND,.....	Mr. Hemming.	Mr. Richings.	Mr. Lindsay.	Mr. W. Wheatly.
TOM NODDY,.....	" Strickland.	" Placide.	" Burton.	" H. Placide.
INKPEN,.....	" Buckstone.	" Chippendale.	" Eberle.	" J. B. Buckstone
MARY,.....	Miss Cooper.	Miss Cushman.	Mrs. Walstein.	Miss S. Cushman.
GABRIELLE,.....	" Taylor.	Mrs. Richardson.	Miss De Bar.	" C. "

COSTUMES.

CAPTAIN ORMOND.—Scarlet doublet with gold lace, trimmed with blue; blue trunks trimmed with gold lace at the knee; blue silk scarf; cuirass; hat and feathers; black wig (King Charles); yellow boots with lace; spurs.

TOM NODDY.—Brown tabed jacket; full trunks trimmed with red braid and black velvet; black satin cloak; long black satin waistcoat; long red stockings; black shoes.

INKPEN.—Light drab jacket and trunks; black stockings; russet shoes.

MARY.—Blue silk and black velvet; point lace.

GABRIELLE.—White dress; point lace; hat, &c.—*2d Dress.*—Scarlet doublet, trimmed with gold; white trunks with gold; yellow boots; black hat.

By Exchange
Army and Navy Club
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TOM NODDY'S SECRET.

ACT I.

SCENE I. — *The best room in* MR. THOMAS NODDY'S *house. — Globes, books, old fashioned furniture, a door in* C. *opening to a garden. — A window to the* R. *and on the same side a table with writing materials. — On the* L. *a door.*

Enter INKPEN *and* MARY.

Inkpen. Am I never to have an answer, Miss Mary? I've waited till I can wait no longer. You know I love you, — will you be mine?

Mary. You have my answer, Mr. Inkpen; I've referred you to my uncle.

Inkpen. But what's the use of my going to him? You know very well that there's no getting a plain answer to a plain question out of him. He never can make up his mind, as to what he ought to do, until it's too late to do it — and even if it were otherwise, his memory is so bad, that he would never remember to-morrow the decision he came to to-day. What's the use of asking his sanction to our marriage? his reply will be, "We'll see about it; I'll not forget to remember to turn it over in my mind by-and-by;" and then he'll tie a knot in his handkerchief, and entirely forget ten minutes afterwards why he tied it.

Mary. (R.) It is too true; yet I cannot marry without his consent — can't you be content to enjoy my society daily?

Inkpen. No, Miss Mary, I can't, because other young men come and get smiles surreptitiously, that ought by rights all to belong to me.

Mary. I'm afraid you're of a jealous disposition!

Inkpen. I am — desperate jealous, because I can't be sure of not marrying another; but if you were once to become Mrs. Inkpen, I should be as tranquil, and happy, and confiding as possible!

Mary. Confiding! I'm sure I see no symptoms of *that.*

Inkpen. Because nobody can help admiring you, and because you take pains to be admired — to-day, now, you look so smart!

Mary. Oh, because we expect strangers.

Inkpen. Young men, I dare say. Very well — you'll break my heart — I can't rule the boys' copies straight while you go on like this.

Mary. There now! well, you shan't know who is coming — the other day you actually got angry with a young man because he looked at me.

Inkpen. And very natural too!

Mary. Very natural that young men should look at me!

Inkpen. Oh, Miss Mary, you really will be the death of me; it 's this terrible uncertainty that ruffles my temper, and wears me to a shadow.

Mary. Oh, no fear of your vanishing entirely — but be quiet, for here comes my uncle!

Noddy, (*without*). We 'll see about it — I can't give any answer now; we 'll see about it.

Enter NODDY, C.

Noddy. Really I am perplexed with so many things upon my mind. Ah, you there, Mary? the boys want a half-holiday — and press for an immediate answer — impossible!

Mary. Impossible! Then you have refused the poor fellows.

Noddy. Ah, no! not refused — I could not take upon me decidedly to refuse — but I said that I 'd see about it — stop; I 'll tie a knot in my handkerchief, and then I shall recollect to take it into consideration. (*Ties a knot in his handkerchief.*)

Inkpen, (*aside*). When the day is o'er, he 'll consider whether it ought to have been a holiday! just the way he serves *me.* (*Aloud.*) Good morning to you, sir!

Noddy. Ah, you 're there, are you? good morning — do you wish to speak to me?

Inkpen. Yes; and on the old subject.

Noddy. What,— spelling books wanting for the little boys? or rules or slates, or —

Inkpen. No, no; I come once more to ask your consent. Miss Mary refers me to you, and —

Noddy. Yes, yes; very proper — I 'll see about it — we 'll talk of this another time — this day week — or — stop — I 'll put my ring on another finger, and then I shall remember to — (*looks at his hand.*)

Inkpen. I cannot be put off any longer, sir; you know I have a little independence, and you must decide one way or another — yes or no.

Noddy, (*who has been looking puzzled*). Well, I declare, I had already changed my ring from the forefinger of my right hand to the forefinger of my left — do you see that?

Inkpen. What has that to do with my question?

Noddy, (*trying to remember*). I must have changed that ring because I had a particular reason for wishing to remember some particular thing — something that I wished to see about.

Inkpen. I dare say it was my marriage with Mary.

Noddy. Hey? your marriage — it might be — but no, I don't think that was it — you confuse me, putting two ideas into my head at one time — it 's too much — let me see — that ring —

Inkpen. Well, stick to one idea — my marriage is to take place?

Noddy. We 'll see about it; you 're a very excellent good creature, but it 's impossible for me to give you an answer to-day.

Inkpen. Oh, yes, come — let me go and buy the ring.

Noddy, (*looking at his hand*). The ring — I must have changed that for some very important reason.

Inkpen. Sir, you are very unkind.

Noddy. Hey — what were you saying?

Inkpen. Very! for you know I would do anything to serve you.

Noddy. I believe it, I do, indeed! You 're a good creature, and now you really can serve me materially.

Inkpen. Only tell me how!

Noddy. Just by going away, and leaving me alone with my niece to collect my ideas, and — (*looking at his hand*) — Why in the world did I change my ring? (*Crosses to* L.)

Inkpen, (*angry*). Oh, this is too bad! Sir, I 'd have you to know —

Mary, (*advancing from her work*). Hush — my uncle does not mean to offend you — pray leave us together.

Inkpen. I cannot stand this; I 'm furious!

Noddy. Yes — yes — good bye, Inkpen; go and keep the boys in order; and as for you, Mary, we 'll see about it.

Mary, (*aside*). Go — go — make no reply. I will see you again by-and-by.

Inkpen. (R.) Remember your promise: as for your uncle, if he does not soon give me an answer, I 'll run away with you.

Mary. Yes — yes — we 'll see about it. Ha! ha! go along.

[*Exit* INKPEN, R.

We are alone now, uncle: he is gone.

Noddy. (L.) I 'm delighted to hear it, for he ruffled my temper and confused my ideas at a moment when I require all my self-possession; this day my head ought to be particularly clear. (*Takes out his handkerchief and notices the knot which he made when he first entered.*) Heydey, what 's this? a knot in my handkerchief! dear me, I must have made it because I wished particularly to remember something — but what it was, I have now entirely forgotten!

Mary. (R.) How very unfortunate!

Noddy. Yes; but I know how to remedy the evil. I 'll make a knot in another corner to remind me to take care and recollect what reason I had for making the first knot. (*Makes another knot.*)

Mary. But what was it you were going to tell me, uncle? You said you would require all your self-possession.

Noddy. Ay — very likely — I often do — but why more particularly at this moment I really forget, but we 'll see about it; and perhaps, by changing my ring from one finger to another, I may by-and-by be able to —

Mary, (*aside*). Oh, this is hopeless!

Noddy. Ah, now, I know — yes — yes — it has just flashed upon me.

Mary. Then make haste and tell me, for fear you should forget it again.

Noddy. Yes — yes — it is because I expect Captain Ormond to arrive to-day.

Mary. His servant is here already, and is now preparing his chamber.

Noddy. Very good — let me see, there was something else I had to ask — oh — and Gabrielle — is she arrived yet?

Mary. No! and pray why have you sent for her from her school at Tewksbury?

Noddy. Because I had a letter from the captain. Oh, my dear, you don't know the bother I'm in! I sent a coach and horses for her, I could not do more, and she ought to have been here by this time.

Mary. And do you expect the captain to-day?

Noddy. To-day! I trust not! but very probably, and, at all events, sooner or later the worst must be known.

Mary. What can be the matter now? whenever Captain Ormond has been mentioned of late, you have seemed so frightened; dear uncle, if there be any little difficulty let us talk it over before he comes.

Noddy. Little difficulty! he'll probably kill me, he'll be so furious.

Mary. Oh, impossible! pray tell me all.

Noddy. Hey? all? all what? Oh, I know — about Captain Ormond — yes — yes — you were too young to remember the circumstances — you could not have been more than eight or ten years old — for that was in the year 1651 — and we are now in the month of June, 1660. So it 's nine years ago, and I then lived just where I live now, in the environs of Worcester town, and had written in letters of gold over my door — "Mr. Tom Noddy, teacher of Latin, Greek, Writing and Arithmetic." And it had a very striking effect, as it has now. One day — no, it was not in the day — but it was one night — just after the terrible battle which took place here, when the streets were strewed with dead bodies, when our present good King Charles was conquered, and William the Conquerer — no — no — I don't mean him — but the forces of Oliver Cromwell gained the day. Well, one night a rap came at my door, and the battle being quite over, when the rap had been violently repeated six or seven times, I desired some one to open it, and there was a soldier, one of the royalist party, a handsome young man of nineteen or twenty, who bore before him on his war-horse a beautiful little boy.

Mary. And the young soldier was Captain Ormond?

Noddy. Now you really put me out; he certainly was not a captain then, and if I call him a captain in that portion of my story when he was not a captain, I shall never be able to retain the thread of my discourse.

Mary. Well, pray go on.

Noddy. He held by the hand as he entered my house a beautiful little boy, about eight years old. "Sir," said he, bowing to me gracefully, "you are, I believe, an instructor of young gentlemen?" — "Sir," said I, "I'm Tom Noddy, and such is my profession." — "Well," continued the little fellow, — no, the soldier — "here is a little fellow that I wish to have in your care — here is a purse,

containing fifty broad pieces, and you shall yearly receive an adequate sum for his maintenance and education; I have not time to say more, my royal master is closely pursued, and I must rejoin him; adieu!"

Mary. And thus he quitted you?

Noddy. Yes: he remounted his horse and galloped away. — I took up the purse, and looked at the — the — little individual — I resolved to do my duty, and certainly the stranger was as good as his word, for his remittances have regularly reached me.

Mary. Hark! I hear a carriage! [GABRIELLE *speaks without*, C.

Noddy. Ah! it is Gabrielle! how delighted I am that she is arrived before the captain!

Enter GABRIELLE, C.

Gabrielle, (*runs to* NODDY). My dear friend, I am so glad to see you, and you too, Mary — how you are improved! I 'm so glad to see this place, for it 's the first home that I can remember.

Mary, (R.) We are equally glad to see you, dear Gabrielle — I declare, she is quite grown, is she not, uncle?

Noddy, (L.) I really cannot take upon myself to answer that question decidedly at the moment, but we 'll see about it — we 'll measure her.

Gabrielle. I 'm sure you will not hesitate to say that you are glad to see me, which is much more to the purpose.

Noddy. Glad! why really — I — don't know what to say, my dear, for my mind is sadly harassed.

Gabrielle. I suppose something extraordinary has occurred by your sending for me in such haste.

Noddy. My dear, I was obliged to send for you for a most embarrassing reason — very embarrassing indeed!

Gabrielle. Indeed!

Noddy. Yes, in fact Captain Ormond is coming.

Gabrielle. Capt. Ormond! What, my kind benefactor, who has been absent for so many years? has so regularly remitted to you such large sums on my account? — ah, how I do long to see him — he has been to me a father — brother — friend. But for him I might have perished, or should at all events been poor and uneducated; did you say he was coming here?

Noddy. Why, certainly, I committed myself so far, having received a letter from him, to —

Gabrielle. To announce his arrival! Then I was not mistaken; I have already seen him.

Noddy. Seen him? — oh, dear!

Gabrielle. A few miles from hence, as the carriage was passing a gentleman on horseback, the horse started, reared violently, and he was thrown, but in a moment he regained his saddle, and gaily waved his hand to me to assure me of his safety — I am sure it was Captain Ormond. I could not imagine when or where I had seen him before, but now I can have no doubt.

Noddy. Oh! — impossible you should remember him; you were a mere child when last you saw him.

Gabrielle. True; but I was a child who looked upon the preserver of my life — such impressions are not easily obliterated.

Noddy. She knew him — dear me —— dear me — how very embarrassing!

Gabrielle. And he wrote to you?

Noddy. Hey? yes, here 's his letter.

Mary. Well then, you had better read it to us — we shall understand all about it.

Gabrielle. Yes — yes; read it!

Noddy, (*crosses to* C.) What! — read it you say? Why, yes, perhaps that *is* the step I ought to take. (*Reads.*) "London, June 21st, 1660. — Dear Sir: — I have been at length enabled to accompany my royal master to London, after a long and painful exile."

Gabrielle. A painful exile! poor fellow!

Noddy, (*reads*). "Though I have not heard from you, I have ascertained that you are living in the same place; my remittances have, I trust, reached you with punctuality, and I now am most anxious to see the dear child I placed under your care. I long to embrace him and call him *my son!*"

Gabrielle. His son!

Noddy, (*confused*). Yes, it is in the letter, (*spelling,*) *M Y —— S O N* son! *my son!*

Gabrielle. Ah, then Captain Ormond left *another* child in your care?

Noddy. No — oh dear, no — only you.

Gabrielle. But he says —

Noddy. Yes, he says "my son," — and you see that is precisely what renders my situation at this moment so peculiarly embarrassing; but the mistake was natural enough, for when he found you first, and indeed, when he brought you to me, you had on a pair of — that is — I mean — you were a little boy; — no — no — dressed in boy's clothes.

Gabrielle. Boy's clothes!

Noddy. Yes — I suppose, in time of trouble, little boys are supposed to be in less peril than little girls, and so those about you, in the midst of the battle and murder that was going on in the town of Worcester, thought it prudent to put you in a little pair of —

Gabrielle, (*hastily*). But Captain Ormond — *he* knows all this — of course you told him?

Noddy. Told him, my dear! I 've never seen him since!

Gabrielle. But you wrote to him? — it was your duty to write to him!

Noddy. My poor wife, who was living then — though you 're aware that now, unfortunately, she —

Gabrielle. Yes — yes — but Captain Ormond, — go on.

Noddy. Why my wife, who of course had the care of you, certainly advised me to write to the captain, and tell him that we would take great care of his little girl — *little girl* of course *dashed* —

Gabrielle. Well — and you —

Noddy. I always said I 'd see about it! and —

Gabrielle. But you *did* write?

Noddy. Why, I put it off so long that I did not know what excuse to make for not having done it before — and at last —

Gabrielle. Well, at *last* you wrote?

Noddy. No. At last, there was a difficulty about his address — he was following in the suit of the exiled king — now in the low countries, and now in the high countries; now in France, and now in Holland; so that unless I had directed my letter to "Captain Ormond, Poste Restant Europe," it stood no chance of reaching him!

Gabrielle. Oh, what a sad error! this dear friend, that I have so longed to meet, may look on me with disappointment. He hastens to meet a son!

Noddy. Yes — yes — it 's dreadful! I see all the difficulties of my situation!

Gabrielle. He will look upon me as an annoyance — he must have arranged all his plans.

Noddy. Oh yes, and has sent a beautiful horse for his son to ride upon — and the prettiest uniform I ever saw in my life; he has secured you a post near the king!

Gabrielle. Poor fellow! what a disappointment! Oh that I were a boy! to be a son to him. I would love him; how I would exert myself to please him!

Noddy. What will become of us? and the horse too? and the uniform? He ought to have sent your virginals, or an embroidery frame.

Gabrielle. He must know the truth at once!

Noddy. To be sure — we 'll see about it — and, by the by, I think you 'd much better tell him yourself.

Gabrielle. Impossible! he would dislike me — and were he to frown on me, it would kill me.

Noddy. Kill you! That would be serious! Then, Mary, my dear, *you* had better tell him!

Mary. Remember, uncle, that after all you will be responsible, for to you the child was confided — you must tell him yourself.

Noddy. Dear me, we 'll see about it — we certainly —

Gabrielle. Hark! I hear a horse — it stops at the gate — 't is Ormond!

Noddy. Oh! what will become of me?

Gabrielle. Had not this cruel concealment been carried on, how joyfully I should have met him!

Mary. Come with me, Gabrielle; my uncle must first see him alone. [*Exeunt* GABRIELLE *and* MARY, R.

Noddy. Don't leave me! They are gone! She talked of a cruel concealment! cruel! They 'll all execrate me — here he comes!

Ormond, (*as he enters* C.) Very well, I shall find him, I dare say. (*Sees* NODDY.) Oh yes, here he is — give me your hand — I now remember you perfectly. I must consider you an old friend.

Noddy, (*embarrassed*). I — yes — certainly. (*Aside.*) What will become me?

Ormond. And the child — my dear boy — my adopted son — my adopted son — how is he? is he here? I long to see him!

Noddy. And — and you *really* knew me?

Ormond. Oh yes, the same open frank countenance; no deceit, no!

Noddy. Hem!

Ormond. But where is my boy?

Noddy. You must be fatigued!

Ormond. No — no — where is he?

Noddy. But you are scarcely arrived, and —

Ormond. My only object is to see him!

Noddy. You must take some refreshments, and then we 'll see about it.

Ormond. I require no refreshments; besides, I met with a slight accident —

Noddy. An accident — dear me!

Ormond. Oh, nothing — a mere trifle — I am not so *au fait* with my horsemanship as I was before I left England; my steed threw me — at the moment the prettiest little woman I ever saw in my life passed in a carriage; she looked frightened out of her wits, and was out of sight before I could do more than assure her by a gesture that I was safe.

Noddy. Safe — I 'm very glad. (*Aside.*) I should not have objected if a few little bruises had detained him at the inn!

Ormond. But the boy — pray fetch him.

Noddy. What boy? I beg pardon — yes, I know.

Ormond. But by what name do you call him? I forgot that.

Noddy. Oh, Gabrielle! (*Pronouncing it as a female name.*)

Ormond. Gabriel! (*Pronouncing it as a male.*) Why did you choose that name? — it savors a little of the Puritans — but no matter, the days of Oliver are at an end — and Gabriel — yes; I dare say I shall like that name very well.

Noddy. I 'm glad you don't object to the name, because, you see, viewing names historically, there are many names —

Ormond. Methinks I see the dear boy now.

Noddy, (*aside*). I wish you did with all my heart. (*Aloud.*) I can fully enter into your impatience; for when one has saved the life of a fellow-creature, it is natural that one should — by the by, I don't think I ever knew *how* it was you saved the — the — little individual's life? You had not time to see me, and the — the — little individual was so young that —

Ormond. You must remember the situation of the town after the unfortunate battle; as I rode from the field I saw, crouching beneath a tent, the form of a beautiful woman — she was dying, and by her side was a lovely boy.

Noddy. A boy?

Ormond. The mother expired; but I snatched up the child and bore him to your house; you know the rest, and now at once let me see Gabriel.

Noddy. I must speak.

Ormond. What is the matter — is the boy ill?

Noddy. The boy!

Ormond. Is the child alive?

Noddy. Yes ; the child is quite well — *quite.*

Ormond. Heaven be praised ! But if well, why is he not here ?

Noddy. Why, before you see the — the — individual, I think I ought to speak a few words.

Ormond. Oh ! he has been too gay ? has spent too much money ? and flirted with too many pretty girls ?

Noddy. No — no.

Ormond. Played deeply ? I can forgive anything, and he will offend no more. If he is in debt, I will settle all demands.

Noddy. No — that is not it. I can't tell you ; you keep guessing so quick !

Ormond. Then he is in love ? No matter ; he will forget all that when I take him to the regiment.

Noddy. The regiment ?

Ormond. By the by, has he tried on the uniform I sent him ? Did he like it ?

Noddy. Oh, the — the individual is always delighted with every new proof of your affection.

Ormond. The dear boy ! — honored as I am with the favor of my sovereign, my protege is sure of rising rapidly in the army — I 'll teach him to fence — to practise with the pistol — ay, and to ride too — though my own fall this morning shows me rather out of practice myself.

Noddy, (*aside*). We 'll see about it.

Ormond. You know I always told you that he was to be brought up as a soldier. Of course you attended to my wishes.

Noddy. Oh, yes ; as far as lay in my power : but if his natural turn did not lie that way, you can't blame *me.*

Ormond. Why, you don't mean to say my boy 's a coward ?

Noddy. I 'm not at all conscious of having used such an expression ; but you know you are a very young man still, or you 'll be falling in love, and going away — and you 'll forget the — the individual.

Ormond. No, never — he is my adopted son, and he alone engrosses my affections. (*Crosses to* R.)

Noddy. Well, we shall certainly see about it and — and —

Ormond, (*looking from window*). Ah, who is that pretty woman now walking in your garden ?

Noddy. A pretty woman ? (*Looks out.*)

Ormond. That 's the identical beauty who passed me when I fell this morning — tell me, is she your relation ?

Noddy. I certainly look upon her as a sort of relation.

Ormond. You must introduce me.

Noddy, (*aside*). Now this is an additional perplexity.

Ormond. And now send Gabriel to me. I will not wait a moment longer.

Noddy, (*aside*). Anything to get out of the room. (*Aloud.*) Certainly, we 'll see about it. (*Aside.*) She shall come and tell her own story. [*Exit,* L.

Ormond. A tiresome old man ! But if he has done his duty to my boy, I shall excuse everything — every moment seems an age.

(*Goes to window.*) Nobody in the garden, not even that pretty girl I saw just now — she might have amused me.

[*While he looks from the window,* NODDY *enters in front with* GABRIELLE, *in a handsome uniform,* L.

Noddy, (*aside*). Why am *I* to come with you? you had much better go alone.

Gabrielle, (*aside*). I dare not, I am so frightened!

Noddy, (*aside*). But I don't understand what you are going to do or say?

Gabrielle, (*aside*). Present me — name me — that is all I ask — I will then speak for myself.

Noddy. Oh, well — if that 's all, certainly. Captain Ormond?

Ormond, (*turning.*) Yes; who is this?

Noddy, (*pointing to* GABRIELLE). The — the individual.

Ormond. Gabriel?

Noddy. Yes.

Ormond, (*runs to her*). My dear boy — my dear son! (*Grasps her hand.*)

Gabrielle. Oh, my friend — my dear — dear benefactor!

[*Falls on her knee, and kisses his hand* — ORMOND *raises and embraces her.*

Ormond. My son — my dear son! — Hang it, I can't see, I surely can't be crying! Call me your father.

Gabrielle. Oh, no — you don't look like my father, you are so young.

Ormond. And my uniform fits you! yet I must confess I expected to see a taller and more military figure.

Gabrielle. You are disappointed.

Ormond. No, on my honor — just as I see you now, I would have you ever remain — I feel happy while I gaze on you. (*Aside.*) What can the old man be fidgeting about?

Noddy. I 'll leave you together now.

Ormond. Do so, by all means —

Noddy. Certainly. (*Aside.*) He 'll soon know all! I should like to lock myself up in the coal-cellar. [*Exit* R.

Ormond. Give me your hand; are you glad to see me again?

Gabrielle. Oh, yes! indeed I am, very glad — I was never so happy before.

Ormond, (*sits*). You would not have remembered me?

Gabrielle. Oh, yes; I have never forgotten you — I have thought of you, dreamt of you. (*Aside.*) I could not have said that if it had not been for the uniform.

Ormond. And you would have known me?

Gabrielle, (*bringing a chair rather near him*). Yes! (*Aside.*) I *did* know him when he fell from his horse, but I must not say so!

Ormond. But you don't seem at your ease with me. You 're not afraid of me?

Gabrielle, (*drawing nearer*). Oh, no, sir, not at all!

Ormond. Sir: you are not to call me "Sir!"

Gabrielle. Well, then, Captain?

Ormond. Captain! just as bad!

Gabrielle. What would you have me call you?

Ormond. Remember I have protected you since you were an infant — you have known no other father — what then does your own heart bid you call me?

Gabrielle, (*taking his hand*). Ormond, dear Ormond —

Ormond. That 's right, dear Gabriel!

Gabrielle. You cannot doubt my love — my gratitude I mean — and I only fear I shall prove unworthy of your unceasing kindness. I have no friend but you, and should you ever desert me, I am lost.

Ormond. I desert you? Never! — always come to me in any difficulty, you will find me ready to assist you. Even now I see that there 's something the matter — you are anxious and embarrassed; tell me what annoys you — perhaps you 've killed a man in a duel?

Gabrielle. Oh, no, no! What a strange notion! (*Aside.*)

Ormond. Well, I only asked the question; be assured, at all events, that you will always be the first object with me!

Gabrielle. Not if — if you marry.

Ormond. Marry! *I* marry! I 'm not likely to do that. I consider you my own child, and with such a companion I shall not think of marriage — my mind will be occupied in teaching you how to be a soldier!

Gabrielle, (*timidly*). Would a — a daughter have been equally interesting to you?

Ormond. A daughter! oh, dear, no — I should never have known what to do with a daughter — always sitting at work. The eternal snip, snip, snip of her scissors ringing in my ears! Then the difficulty of getting a daughter settled in life, as the saying is. Oh, it would have bored me to death. But a boy takes up his little knapsack, eats what you eat, drinks what you drink, and is always content with a little homely bed spread in the corner of your tent. No, no — you are my son; and as for marriage — I swear —

Gabrielle. Oh, don't swear you 'll never marry —

Ormond. And why not? — but, dear me, now I look at you again, I see a likeness.

Gabrielle. Indeed!

Ormond. Yes; to a young girl I saw just now in the garden.

Gabrielle. Indeed! Oh! very likely — a family likeness!

Ormond. What do you mean?

Gabrielle. That was my cousin.

Ormond. Your cousin! how came *you* by cousins?

Gabrielle. Yes; one cousin — only one!

Ormond. Then have you discovered your relations?

Gabrielle. Oh! Mr. Noddy will tell you all about that by-and-by — I have no relation but that little cousin — and yourself.

Ormond. And what is she?

Gabrielle. An orphan like myself?

Ormond. Where does she come from?

Gabrielle. She has been under the care of a governess at Tewksbury, and came here to-day.

Ormond. True — I overtook her on that road this morning.

Gabrielle. Oh, yes! she told me that.

Ormond. Your cousin is a charming girl.

Gabrielle. I have often been told that.

Ormond. And do you admire her?

Gabrielle. Oh, yes — certainly.

Ormond. Then perhaps you are in love with her?

Gabrielle. Oh dear, no! I 'm told she has had excellent offers, but has rejected them all — she is very difficult to be pleased.

Ormond. Indeed!

Gabrielle. Oh, very — even *I* have failed.

Ormond. Wonderful! but she may like another after all.

Gabrielle. I 'll bet you a wager you don't succeed.

Ormond. Oh, you lay wagers, do you? Well, suppose I try.

Gabrielle. I advise you not.

Ormond. Well, perhaps you are right — so I think the sooner we leave this place the better. I sent you a spirited horse, and I long to see you bestride him.

Gabrielle, (*aside*). Oh, dear me! (*Aloud.*) A spirited horse! Remember what happened to *you* this morning?

Ormond, (*laughing*). You are at liberty to laugh at me — but for all that we must go.

Gabrielle. Oh, but I can't go.

Ormond. Why not?

Gabrielle, (*aside*). What excuse shall I make? (*Aloud.*) It is — I don't know how to tell you — but — the fact is — I 'm in love.

Ormond. With your cousin?

Gabrielle. Oh, no!

Ormond. Who is it? Who is the lady?

Gabrielle. We have been brought up together, our hearts are closely twined, you cannot tear them asunder.

Ormond. I must know who it is.

Gabrielle. The niece of Mr. Noddy — the adorable Mary.

Ormond. This is what old Noddy wanted to tell me! this is the mystery! I must meet the old man, and speak my mind on the subject.

Gabrielle. Then you will not force us asunder? No, no. Ah! she is here. (*Aside.*) What will poor Mary think?

Enter MARY, R.

Mary. Captain Ormond, if you wish to repose, your chamber is ready for you.

Gabrielle. Ah! dearest, best, how welcome are you. We were talking of you. Most adorable creature, we are never to be separated. (*Aside to* MARY.) Take the hint from me — deny nothing.

Ormond. This is the niece then?

Mary, (*aside to* GABRIELLE.) What can it mean? (*Aloud.*) So you 've told all?

Gabrielle. Yes; and he consents to our union. Happy man that I am!

Ormond. Here 's a pretty piece of business!

Gabrielle, (*runs and embraces* MARY). Dear, dear Mary! are we not a fortunate pair?

Enter INKPEN, R.

Inkpen. Hey ! what ! a soldier kissing Mary ! Well, in my life I never saw anything to equal that ! and another soldier looking on !

Mary, (*aside*). Ah ! what a rage he will be in !

Ormond. You seem to have a rival, Gabriel !

Inkpen. You did not expect me quite as soon, it seems, Miss Mary Noddy. Now I understand why I could get no answer this morning. Now I know why your uncle said he 'd see about it ! and I 'll see about it too, I can promise you.

Ormond, (*aside*). I wish this little third person would interfere and break off the match.

Inkpen, (*crosses to* GABRIELLE). Though you are a soldier, sir, and I am usher, you 'll find, sir, that it will not be easy to interfere with my pretensions with impunity. You wear a feather in your cap, sir, and I only a pen behind my ear, but I don't want for valor, sir, and that you shall find. [*Crosses to* C.

Ormond, (*aside to* GABRIELLE). You must not allow that man to insult you — answer him.

Inkpen. You little whip-snapper, I despise you !

Ormond, (*to* INKPEN). Sir, you are behaving improperly !

Inkpen, (*to* ORMOND). Sir, you are meddling in what don't concern you.

Gabrielle, (*aside to* ORMOND). Don't condescend to notice him — I 'll settle this.

Mary, (*to* INKPEN). I beg to say that I am mistress of my own actions, and you are intrusive.

Inkpen. I intrusive ! *I* — and I 'm to be told so by a girl who lets the soldiers kiss her !

Ormond, (*to* GABRIELLE). Speak to him — say one such soldier is worth a bushel of writing-masters.

Gabrielle. Yes ; one soldier is worth a bushel of such writing-masters.

Ormond, (*aside*). Excellent !

Inkpen, (*advancing*). A bushel, sir ! take care or you 'll be in a peck of troubles.

Mary. You 'd better stop, Mr. Inkpen.

Inkpen. No power shall stop me ! Shall I be supplanted by a little contemptible — boy — B O Y — a thing of one syllable ?

Ormond, (*aside*). Box his ears !

Gabrielle, (*aside*). Do you bid me do it ?

Ormond, (*aside*). If you don't I 'll do it myself.

Inkpen. A little weak effeminate — [GABRIELLE *boxes his ears.*

Ormond. Excellent again !

Gabrielle, (*aside*). Oh dear ! how I 've hurt my hand !

Inkpen, (*furious*). A blow ! — I 'll be revenged !

Ormond. I 'll arrange this affair — you will require satisfaction, contemptible as you are ; you shall have it. What are your arms ?

Inkpen, (*furious*). Blunderbuss, rifle, musket, pistol, broad-sword, small sword, sabre, cutlass, bayonet, knife, hatchet, tomahawk, penknife !

Gabrielle. Hush, little man, you mean birch-rod, cane and rule. Name your hour!

Inkpen. Hour, sir! All day long, from dawn to sunset, and even then I 'll fight by torchlight.

Ormond. At seven o'clock, at the back of the garden.

Inkpen. I will be there to avenge that blow! No man ever struck *me* and lived. [*Exit* R.

Enter NODDY, R.

Noddy. Oh dear! what a noise! what 's the matter?

Ormond, (*coolly*). Oh, only a duel!

Noddy. A duel! and who is going to fight?

Ormond. My little Gabriel.

Noddy. The individual. (*Aside to* GABRIELLE.) I know how to prevent that. I 'll tell all.

Gabrielle, (*aside*). No, no — be silent, keep my secret — come, Mary. [*Exeunt* GABRIELLE *and* MARY, L.

Noddy. Dear me, a duel! what is he going to fight about?

Ormond. You may thank your silly blindness.

Noddy. My silly blindness! why, really, when *you* talk of blindness I —

Ormond. I know all! deception is useless.

Noddy. Oh, you know all? So much the better.

Ormond. Then you approve of their attachment?

Noddy. I don't know what you mean.

Ormond. Don't you know that my adopted son, Gabriel, wants to marry your niece, and that if we don't keep a good look-out they 'll run away with one another?

Noddy. La! bless me! what a heap of circumstances to come together in one day. The — the individual run away with my niece! I don't think that likely, but we 'll see about it — indeed, if you wish it, I 'll speak to my niece on the subject, and that I may remember to do so, I 'll tie a knot in my handkerchief. (*Takes it out.*) Well, I protest, here are two knots already, and I have not the remotest idea why I put them there; however, I 'll make a third. (*Ties knot.*)

Ormond. It is on account of his absurd attachment to your niece that Gabriel is going to fight that usher of yours.

Noddy. And Gabrielle 's really going to fight.

Ormond. The duel once over, we shall immediately leave this place forever. Send Gabriel to me; I must see him fence before his life is placed in peril. Should I not find him equal to that task, I myself will take his place. Be sure you do not alarm his fair cousin.

Noddy, (*aside*). His fair cousin! who 's that, I wonder?

Ormond, (*looks from the window*). Ah, there she is: she is walking in the garden, and alone. I will hasten and speak with her. Be sure you go to the boy and bid him meet me here. [*Exit* C.

Noddy. Things must come to a crisis soon. I wish this captain had never come. What shall I do about the duel? I must tell him all; yes — on second thoughts I 'll write — yes — now for it. (*Sits at table,* L., *puts on spectacles.*) It 's much better to write. If the

news irritates him, he then in his fury can only tear the letter, but if I were to go and tell him in propria persona he might tear me, so I'll certainly write. (*He writes, and reads the letter.*)

"Honored Captain: — We must, in this life, be prepared for any wonderful event that may occur. You once saved the life of a fellow-creature — you brought the individual to my house, and said, 'Educate this boy!' But it is my duty to inform you that the little boy was a little girl; and to make a long story short, she is the bearer of this letter. I am your humble servant, TOM NODDY."

[*Seals and directs the letter.*

There now — that's a relief to my mind, and now I'll give it to Gabrielle, and she shall deliver it. (*He rises and is passing the window.*)

Enter ORMOND, C., *with foils.*

Ormond. What, *you* still here? — where 's Gabriel?

Noddy. Gabrielle?

Ormond. Yes, I told you to send him here half an hour ago.

Noddy. Yes — but — but — was he not in the garden?

Ormond. Oh, no; I have been walking in the garden with his cousin; he was not there.

Noddy, (*aside*). His cousin! One mystery follows another so quick that I get bewildered. I think it would be better to go and have my head shaved.

Ormond. She is a charming girl! It is high time I and Gabriel should be off, for I could not answer for my heart were I to remain in her society; but pray go and send Gabriel to me immediately.

Noddy. Yes, certainly. (*Aside.*) I'll go and give her the letter, and then she must come and deliver it. [*Exit* L.

Ormond. Ah, he is here — come, my dear Gabriel.

Enter GABRIELLE, C.

Gabrielle. I have been looking for you everywhere!

Ormond. I've got news for you — the old man is reasonable, and does not insist on your marrying his niece, so, the duel once over, we will be off to London.

Gabrielle. Indeed! Then you are impatient to go?

Ormond. Yes, for two reasons — you will be safer, out of Mary's way, and I too am in danger as long as I remain here.

Gabrielle. Indeed! — why so?

Ormond. I dread your cousin's fascination.

Gabrielle, (*aside*). Ah! I rejoice at that. (*Aloud.*) Then you think you could like her?

Ormond. Yes; she is both beautiful and agreeable.

Gabrielle. Oh, then, why should we go? If you ask her prettily, *perhaps* she may marry you.

Ormond. No, no — it 's not your interest that I should marry.

Gabrielle. Indeed, but it is, though.

Ormond. But you are forgetting your duel. Courage will not do well — skill is also required, so take the foil, and we will have a little practice together. (*Gives foil.*) Now for it.

Gabrielle, (*aside*). I've seen people, — so I'll do my best.

[*They fence; after a few passes* GABRIELLE *cries "You've hurt me!" and drops the foil.* — ORMOND *throws aside the foil, and supports her, who seems ready to faint.*

Ormond. The foil must have been broken; let me bind up your hand, my poor boy. What a little hand for such rough exercise!

Gabrielle, (*recovering*). Oh, it is nothing. I feel quite well now!

Ormond. Take courage!

Gabrielle, (*aside*). I don't know where to find it!

Ormond. I shall meet your antagonist: this wound shall be your excuse.

Gabrielle. You meet him? — oh, no!

Enter MARY, L., *with a letter.*

Mary, (*aside*). Oh dear, what shall I do! She is not alone. (*Goes to* GABRIELLE.) How pale you look! — are you ill?

Ormond. He does look pale, indeed. Go, Gabriel, and recover yourself. (*Aside.*) I did not expect to find an effeminate boy.

Mary. You've hurt your hand. (*Aside.*) Are you going? — You must deliver this letter to the captain before you go.

Ormond. They are whispering together: I wish we were off. (*Goes up and sits at table.*)

Gabrielle, (*aside*). Give the letter yourself.

Mary, (*aside*). But my uncle said most particularly *you* were to give it.

Gabrielle. What can it signify which gives it — you do it at once. I go, but shall soon return as my cousin. [*Exit.*

Mary. Dear me, she is gone. I hate delivering this letter to the captain, and what can it signify who delivers it, provided he gets it?

Enter INKPEN, R.

Inkpen. What, Mary here, and with the officer again?

Mary. Ah, here is Inkpen; he shall deliver it. Take that letter and give it to the captain.

Inkpen. I give it — *I* be your postman! I give another man a letter from my soul's idol — I-d-o-l — idol.

Mary. Nonsense, you little jealous fool; it's not a letter from me, it's a letter from my uncle.

Inkpen. Oh, a letter from your uncle?

Mary. Yes, look at the direction — you know his hand. I ask you to deliver it, because I do not wish to speak to the captain myself.

Inkpen. Quite right, I will deliver it. Go along — there's a good girl.

Mary. Be sure you give it to him.

Inkpen. Of course I shall. (*Exit* MARY, L.) It is her uncle's hand — let me be sure of that. Yes, that's his capital O. (*Aloud.*) Captain!

Ormond. Well, what do you want?

Inkpen. A letter for you, sir.

Ormond, (*coming forward*). A letter — give it to me. (*Opens and reads it.*) What is this? from Mr. Noddy — ha! the little boy. What, "the little boy" is a "little girl," and the bearer, too, a "girl!" (*Looks at* INKPEN.)

Inkpen, (*aside*). How he does stare at me! — in such a very peculiar way.

Ormond. Is it possible? a female — and *such* a female! This, then, is the individual for whom I have interested myself for ten years! Oh, a fool I have made of myself!

Inkpen, (*aside*). He seems remarkably angry!

Ormond. I shall go mad — yet — why should I be angry with this poor young woman? — she, at all events, is not to blame. No, no — it is unjust; poor girl, her appearance is not in her favor!

Inkpen, (*aside*). What girl is he talking about — how singularly he fixes his eyes on me!

Ormond. Do not be frightened — I am not angry with you. *You* can't help it — I can feel for a timidity so natural in one in your situation. But now tell me frankly, who is that young lad — whence does he come — what is his name!

Inkpen. What young lad? know nothing about him.

Ormond. No, no — of course *you* have not been permitted to associate with young men — but you must know who he is.

Inkpen. I 'll be shot if I do, though.

Ormond, (*aside*). How coarsely she expresses herself! (*Aloud.*) Remember, I have been your friend from infancy; the orphan girl is surely not ungrateful?

Inkpen. And who the devil 's the orphan girl?

Ormond. Hush — you use expressions little becoming those lips. Since I now know the truth let me see you in your own clothes.

Inkpen. My own clothes — what do you want?

Ormond. In your present costume you are naturally awkward — I cannot wish you to be otherwise: but when you assume the petticoats —

Inkpen. Petticoats!

Ormond. When you stand before me in the dress that befits your sex, I doubt not that I shall find graces and charms that are now obscured by —

Inkpen. He 's mad — he must be mad!

Ormond. Of one thing be assured — if that young man really loves you —

Inkpen. What!

Ormond. If you love him, your union shall not be opposed by me. I have taken an interest in your welfare for so many years, that I cannot, at all events, become indifferent to you; therefore, dear girl —

Inkpen. Dear girl! Zounds, I 'll beat any man black and blue who turns me into ridicule. I 'll call you to account, sir — dear girl, indeed!

Enter MARY, L.

Mary. Oh dear me, what 's the matter?

Inkpen. I gave him the letter, and he has done nothing but insult me ever since.

Mary. Oh dear me, I ought to have given it to him myself as I was desired.

Ormond. As you were desired! Oh, then, I see the cause of this confusion — *you* were told to give me that letter — you then are the little girl. (*Aside.*) This is, at all events, a relief to my mind.

Mary. Yes — I was certainly told to give you that letter.

Ormond. Then come to my arms.

Mary. Good gracious!

Inkpen. Halloo! don't you go near him — don't dare!

Mary. Keep your distance, sir!

Ormond. It must be my adopted child — how well do I remember finding you in your little jacket and trousers.

Mary. *My* jacket and trousers!

Inkpen. *Her* jacket and trousers! what do you mean?

Ormond. Go away — you know not the interest I take in that dear girl's fate.

Inkpen. Dear girl's fate! he was for calling me a dear girl just now.

Ormond, (*kissing* MARY). You have always been accustomed to look to me for support — and I will not desert you now. I forgive you for the deception practised upon me.

Inkpen. There, that 's the second soldier that has kissed Mary to-day! Miss Noddy — little ones and big ones, subalterns and captains, seem all alike to you!

Ormond. Really, your intrusion annoys me.

Inkpen. No doubt of it, and really I wish you at the bottom of the sea. I came here purposely to meet my rival, and now I pop upon another. If I were to meet all my rivals, I've no doubt I should find myself in a crowd! — a regular military muster.

Mary. You are very impertinent, sir!

Ormond. I forbid Mary to receive you in future.

Inkpen. *You* forbid? *you!* come, I like that. What authority have *you,* I should be glad to know?

Enter NODDY, L., *with his spectacles pushed up on his forehead.*

Noddy. There seems no end to worry — what 's the matter now?

Inkpen. A pretty thing, indeed! Soldiers kissing your niece!

Ormond. Nonsense! she is not his niece.

Mary. What can he mean now?

Noddy. Not my niece — where are my spectacles — has anybody seen my spectacles? (*Looks for them on table.*) Captain, did you happen to take my — (MARY *points to them.*) Oh, here they are; and now let me look at the young woman! (*Adjusts spectacles and looks earnestly at* MARY.) Captain Ormond, I am sorry to contradict you, but I do positively affirm that this is my niece.

Ormond. Then explain this, sir — I —

Inkpen. No explanation here, sir; at the proper hour — in the proper place — with the appointed weapon — seven o'clock — garden wall — small sword — come, sir — it only wants a few minutes — I hasten to the spot! [*Exit* o

Ormond. Thank goodness he 's gone! What did you mean by this letter? You explicitly say in it that the bearer, this young lady, is the child I saved.

Noddy. Bless me! that young lady! my niece! oh, no. This is too much for my poor head — another perplexity.

Mary. I see the error now — 't was I gave that letter to the captain.

Noddy. Then you 've made matters worse. I, who thought I was explaining everything! In two words I can make it all clear.

Ormond. Then the sooner you utter the two words the better.

Noddy. I did not intend *her* to deliver that letter.

Ormond. No? — Who then?

Noddy. Another person.

Ormond, (*takes him by the collar*). Speak! who then was to deliver it? Speak —

Noddy. The individual —

[GABRIELLE *has listened at* C. *in female costume, advances* R. C.

Gabrielle. I ought to have delivered it.

Ormond. (R.) *You!* Oh, do not deceive me!

Noddy. (L.) She has just come in time to save me from suffocation.

Gabrielle. Pray pardon me — you ought long since to have been undeceived — but in that I was not to blame.

Noddy, (*aside*). Oh, no; she 'll tell him 't was all my fault.

Gabrielle. I knew not of it until this morning, just before your arrival; and then not having courage to meet you, I made my cousin take my place.

Noddy. Her cousin! She 's floundering into another mystery.

Gabrielle. At length I venture to appear before you —

Ormond. As my adopted child?

Gabrielle. Yes; a daughter — you 'll never know what to do with a daughter — always sitting at her work — the eternal snip, snip of her scissors ringing in your ears?

Ormond. My own words! who could have repeated them to you?

Gabrielle. A person who heard you utter them, and who has no secret from *me.*

Ormond. Think no more of them — I have changed my mind. When I look on you, I feel that I am fortunate in having escaped the guardianship of a rake and a roué.

Gabrielle. But you forget "the difficulty of getting a daughter settled in life," as the saying is.

Ormond. Alas! I shall rather sigh over the probability of your being soon snatched from me by some favored lover!

Gabrielle. Then you never wish to see my cousin again?

Ormond. Oh, no — and yet, I do wish to see him, for he seemed to love me.

Gabrielle. I share all his sentiments; as he feels so I feel; and were we in the same dress, I do not think you would know one from the other.

Ormond. But will you be as unreserved, will you give me your hand, as he would have done?

Gabrielle, (*giving her wounded hand*). That will I as frankly.

Ormond. What! this wound! — It is Gabriel!

Gabrielle. I feared to lose your affections, and therefore ventured to assume the uniform. Gabriel never existed, but Gabrielle lives to thank you for your kindness.

Ormond. To be my only love — my wife! (*Embraces her.*)

Enter INKPEN, C., *with a long sword.*

Inkpen. Pretty soldiers, indeed! There have I been under the garden-wall this half-hour! For shame — poltroons! cowards!

Ormond. Pardon me, I quite forgot you altogether; but there is your antagonist, the lady who boxed your ears.

Gabrielle. And quite ready to apologize for her flippancy.

Noddy. I do think matters are taking a more favorable turn. You must not be angry, my good usher.

Inkpen. Angry! no, I feel honored. I don't care if she beats me again with that lily hand: but *you* are not a young lady in disguise, too, are you? (*To* ORMOND.)

Ormond. Why, no, certainly not; but you have a right to ask, as I actually took *you* for one of the fair sex; but be assured that I have no pretensions to Miss Mary!

Inkpen. Indeed! Well, then, old Tom Noddy, now give me an answer — am I to marry Mary?

Noddy. We 'll see about it — we 'll see about it. I 'll not forget to consider of it by-and-by. I 'll tie a knot in my handkerchief. (*Takes out handkerchief and crosses to* C.) Three knots already! I quite forget what about — I 'll tie the fourth however — and, dear me, my ring changed, too! I wish I could recollect what it was that I wished to remember — can anybody tell me? Oh, I recollect. (*To audience.*) Will you be kind enough to try and remember not to forget to tie knots in all your handkerchiefs, that you may not fail to remind your friends how you approved of TOM NODDY'S SECRET?

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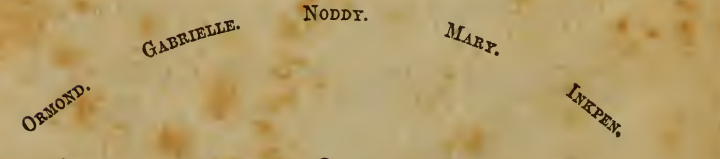

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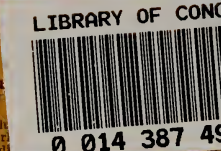
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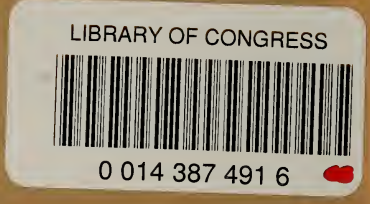
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